

PROCEEDINGS
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RIBES MESCALERIUM, AN UNDESCRIBED CURRANT
FROM NEW MEXICO AND TEXAS.

BY FREDERICK V. COVILLE.

Dr. Valery Havard, in his report on the Flora of Western and Southern Texas, identified one of his plants as *Ribes viscosissimum* Pursh, and wrote of it as "the only gooseberry seen in western Texas, growing sparingly in the Guadalupe Mountains."* On the basis of the same observations Dr. John M. Coulter included *viscosissimum* in his Botany of Western Texas, commenting on it as occurring "sparingly in the mountains west of the Pecos, and apparently the only gooseberry of western Texas."† Dr. Havard's specimen, which is in the National Herbarium, was collected in the Guadalupe Mountains, El Paso County, Texas, in October, 1881. It has neither flowers nor fruit, and has long been a puzzle on account of its peculiar vegetative characters, intermediate between those of *viscosissimum* and *cereum*. In Professor Coulter's description the flower and fruit characters were of course drawn from Rocky Mountain specimens of typical *viscosissimum*, so that the Texas plant has really never been described, nor does any good material of it seem to have been collected.

*Havard, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. 8:524. 1885.

†Contr. U. S. Nat. Herb. 2:109. 1891.

In 1897 Professor E. O. Wooten collected in the White Mountains of Lincoln County, New Mexico, a currant which he distributed with a mark of doubt as *Ribes cereum* Dougl., No. 281 of his collection of that year. The specimen was remarkable in being black-fruited, the fruit of *cereum* being invariably of a light red color. Concluding that this represented an undescribed species I wrote, early last spring, to Professor Wooten, who courteously loaned me his collection of New Mexican *Ribes*. Among these was another fruiting specimen of the new currant, from the Sacramento Mountains, and a fragmentary flowering specimen from the White Mountains.

As Mr. Vernon Bailey, of the Biological Survey, expected to visit southeastern New Mexico during the summer I requested him to look out for this currant, and he has lately handed me some fine flowering specimens of it from the Sacramento Mountains. From all this material the following description has been drawn.

Ribes mescalerium sp. nov.

Erect shrub, without spines or prickles; one-year-old twigs cream to buff-colored, glandular-hairy, the epidermis on older branches soon splitting and weathering away, leaving the branches chestnut brown often overlaid with some thin grayish tissue; leaf-blades roughly orbicular in outline, usually broader than long, 1.5 to 2.5 or sometimes even 3.5 cm. wide, truncate, broadly wedge-shaped, or somewhat cordate at base, 3 to 5-lobed, the lobes unevenly crenate-dentate, or even indistinctly lobulate, with gland-tipped hairs on both surfaces, and on the lower surface some glandless pubescence also; petioles usually a little shorter than the blades, closely pubescent and with a few larger gland-tipped hairs; racemes short, almost capitate, closely 2 to 4 or sometimes even 6-flowered, the glandular-hairy and pubescent deflexed peduncle commonly 8 to 15 mm. in length; bracts obovate, sessile, toothed toward the apex, glandular-hairy, 3 to 5 or sometimes even 7 mm. long; flowers sessile or nearly so, the usually very short pedicels glandular-hairy and pubescent; ovary glandular-hairy; tube of calyx (moist) about 5 to 6 mm. long and 3.5 broad, sparingly glandular-hairy, greenish white, the reflexed ovate-oblong lobes broadly acute or obtuse, 2 to 3 mm. long, pubescent on the outside toward the apex; petals white, rotund, about 2 mm. long; stamens with filaments adhering to the calyx tube as far as the throat, the free portion shorter than the anther, this when expanded about 1 mm. in breadth and length; style stout, smooth, shortly two-lobed at the slightly exerted apex; fruit spherical, black, without bloom, sparingly glandular-hairy, 5 to 8 mm. in diameter in dried specimens, the flattened ones sometimes even 10 mm.

Type specimen in the United States National Herbarium, collected July 21, 1899, in the Sacramento Mountains, at Fresno, Otero County, New Mexico, at an altitude of 7,200 feet, by E. O. Wooten.

So far as known *Ribes mescalerium* is confined to the White and Sacramento Mountains of Lincoln and Otero counties, New Mexico, and the neighboring Guadalupe Mountains which extend across the State line into El Paso County, Texas. The specimens have been collected at altitudes varying from 7,000 to 9,000 feet. Mr. Bailey considers it a plant of the Canadian zone. The flowering specimens are dated May 11 and June 1, and the fruiting specimens July 21 and August 5. Dr. Havard's designation of this currant as a gooseberry was probably based chiefly on the paucity of the fruits in the raceme, a character possessed also by *Ribes cereum*. Although these and other species of the *cereum-viscosissimum-sanguineum* group, in some of which the racemes are many-flowered, have a well-defined calyx tube like the gooseberries, none of them bear spines or prickles on the branches and they are thus easily separable from the true gooseberries.

From *Ribes cereum* our plant is distinguishable in the herbarium by the stalked character of the glands on the leaves and young twigs, by the relatively broader calyx tube, its ratio of breadth to length being about 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ or $1\frac{3}{4}$, and by its black fruit. *Ribes cereum* has the glands on its leaves and young twigs almost always sessile, a corolla tube with the ratio of breadth to length about 1 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ or $3\frac{1}{2}$, and a fruit of bright red color. With *viscosissimum* the new species agrees in the stalked character of the glands on the vegetative parts of the plant, and in the black color of the fruit, but the leaves, flowers, and fruit of *viscosissimum* are much larger, the flowers being about 15 mm. long when the calyx lobes are not reflexed, and the tube about 6 mm. broad, while the pedicels are several millimeters, often 1 cm. or more, in length, and the elliptical-oblong fruit is commonly 8 to 10 mm. broad by 10 to 12 mm. long. The oblong anthers of *viscosissimum*, commonly 1.5 mm. in length, in all the specimens examined, are exceeded by the free portion of the filament. Mr. Bailey states that the bushes are taller than those of *cereum*, being commonly 4 to 6 feet high, and do not spread out into the broadly rounded and closely

branched form common in *cereum*. *Viscosissimum* is ordinarily a few-branched straggling shrub 2 to 4 feet high.

The name selected for the species, *mescalerium*, commemorates the Mescalero Apaches, a tribe of Indians who in former times inhabited the region in which the plant occurs and who now occupy a reservation in the White Mountains of Lincoln County, New Mexico.